



Winter 2005

CUF LINKS

# COMMUNITY & URBAN FORESTRY

## Keeping the urban forestry community connected

*Pam Louks, Community & Urban Forestry Coordinator*

### First Aid for Trees

Given the right kind of help, your trees can survive the damage done to them by the recent onslaught of winter weather. Many areas in Indiana have been hammered recently by ice storms and heavy snow loads. The trees look ripped, torn, and dangerous. The impulse may be to cut them down. Before removing damaged trees, analyze their condition. The largest plant on Earth raises property value by ten to twenty per cent and offers a multitude of benefits. It makes good environmental and economic sense to save them.

Property owners woke up after the recent ice storm to see tree branches lying low to the ground weighted down by the heavy ice layer on their branches. While the view of ice shimmering on the trees was a visual delight, and the walk through ice tunnels provided by the low hanging branches a bit exciting, the trees were, quite frankly, having something like a morning after hang over. The damage is pretty extensive. Luckily, trees have the ability to recover from what nature doles out. But, they may need some help.

#### Assess immediate risks

The first thing to do is to assess immediate risks. Look for broken, hanging, and dangling branches in the tree. Homeowners can remove smaller limbs, but large, high limb removal requiring a ladder and chain saw needs to be done by a professional certified arborist.

Don't touch any tree that is near electrical lines. Trees are conductors of electricity and if the wood touches a live wire and you touch the wood, electrocution can occur.

Until the dangling limbs can be removed, keep away from the tree. A good wind can send the branches tumbling down hitting the nearest target—possibly you.

#### Look carefully at the tree to assess the damage

- ☞ Is its major limbs and central leader (the main upward-trending branch) intact?
- ☞ Are at least 50 percent of the tree's branches still intact?
- ☞ Are there remaining branches that can form new branch structures?
- ☞ Was the tree basically healthy before the storm?

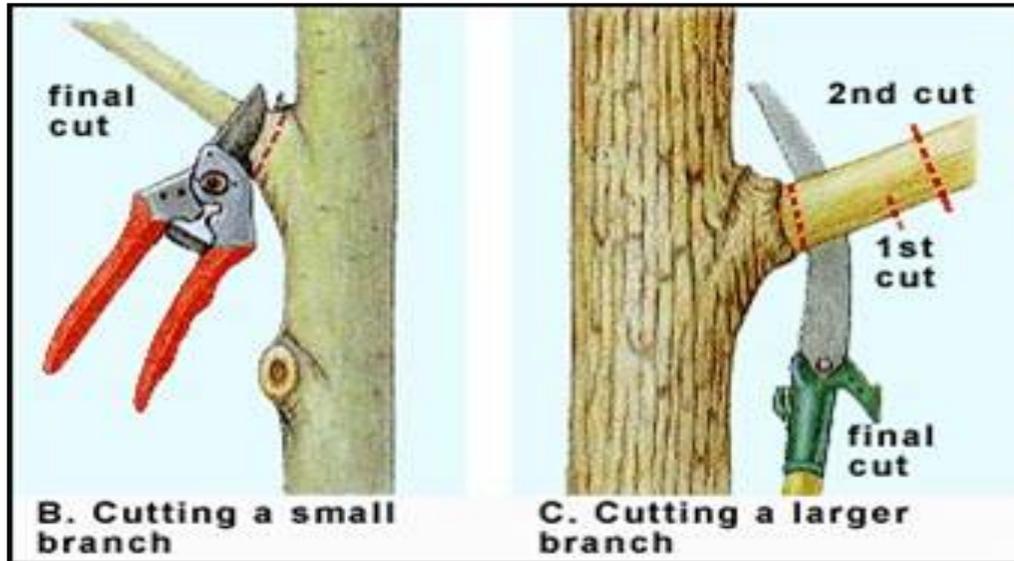
If the answers to these questions are yes, then there is a good chance the tree can be saved.

Remove any trees that have broken or cracked stems (trunks), and many broken roots. The chances for recovery for these trees are slim.

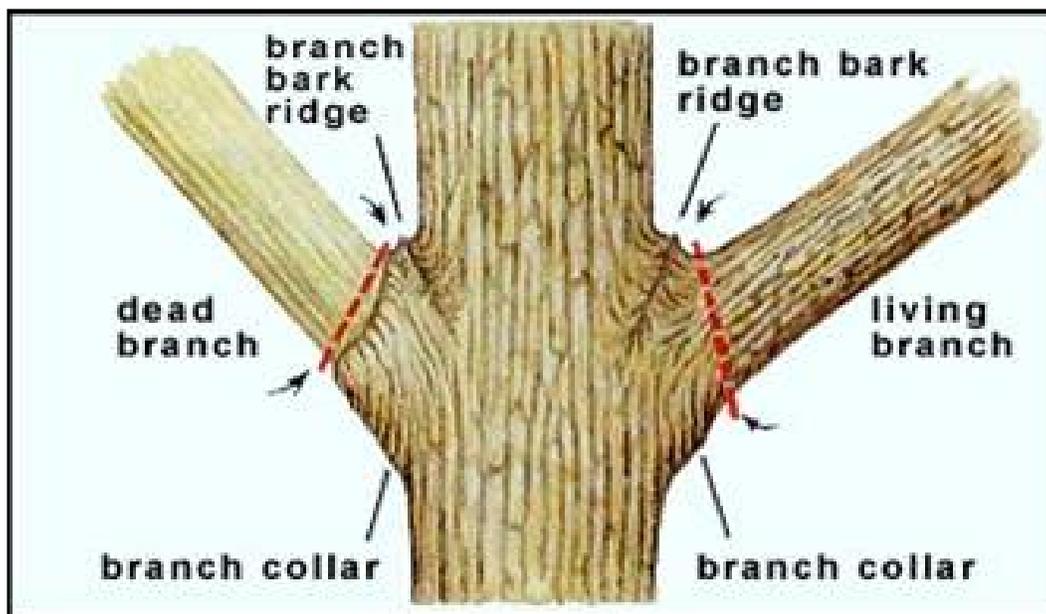
#### Remove the broken branches

Remove the broken branches and stubs that are still attached to the tree. This must be done correctly or the cut will leave a wound that will open the tree up to pest and disease. Smaller branches need to be pruned at the branch collar where they join the larger branch.

Large branches should be removed by a certified arborist who has knowledge of proper pruning practices. They have the right equipment and skill to do the job safely and ensure that the cuts are made correctly being cut back to the branch collar of the limb that is being removed.



Proper pruning cuts -International Society of Arboriculture



## Do not top your trees!



Beware of 'arborists' who offer to do you a favor and top your trees. They may say that it will help future damage. The fact is that many of the trees that had damage in the ice storm were trees that had been topped and the weak branches that sprouted back snapped off the large branches they grew on to. These weak branches splintered, ripped, and broke off during the ice storm and actually created more damage.

Topping is detrimental to the health of a tree. Since the cuts are not made at the branch collar, they leave a stub, and the tree is unable to wall off the cutting wound making it a prime target for pest and disease.

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**Hiring a certified arborist**, who is a tree care professional with knowledge and skills in proper tree care techniques, is recommended for damaged trees. Most of them will come to the site and give an estimate and explain what needs to be done. Be sure and get three estimates. Ask to see their certification card from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), proof of insurance, proof of liability for personal and property damage, and proof of worker's compensation. Contact the CUF office for the list of certified arborists in your area or contact the ISA.

## Only time will tell

There is no absolute guarantee that your trees will survive the storm and recover from their morning after. But, by following these steps they have a good chance of providing many more years of shade, relaxation, oxygen, and cleaner air.

## Finding a certified arborist

**A certified arborist is a tree care professional who has taken courses and field work in arboriculture. The courses and field work culminate in an exam which they must pass in order to receive their certification. In order to maintain certification status, arborists must obtain education credits in the field of arboriculture annually.**

**The arborist certification program was established and is overseen by the International Society of Arboriculture. In Indiana, the program is administered by the Indiana Arborist Association in partnership with Purdue University.**

**To find an arborist in your area, go to the International Society of Arboriculture website at <http://www.isa-arbor.com> and click on "find a certified arborist" and follow the prompts.**

**Beware of 'arborists' who offer to do you a favor and top your trees.**

Contact Indiana Arborist Association for more arborist information at: <http://www.indiana-arborist.org>

## Some Trees Resistant to Ice Storms

*Adapted from Trees and Ice Storms, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and USDA Forest Service*

### Highly resistant

American Sweetgum  
Arborvitae  
Baldcypress  
Black Walnut  
Blue Beech  
Catalpa  
Eastern Hemlock  
Ginkgo  
Kentucky Coffee Tree  
Littleleaf Linden  
Silver Linden  
Swamp White Oak  
White Oak

### Intermediate resistance

Bur Oak  
Northern Red Oak  
Red Maple  
Sugar Maple  
Sycamore  
Tulip Tree (state tree)  
White Ash-plant sparingly due to Emerald  
Ash borer threat

Always plan before you plant. Plant the right tree in the right place.

Don't plant trees that are will have a mature height of more than 25 feet under or within 35 feet of power lines!!!

For a complete species list and help in selecting the right tree for the right place, contact the CUF office for a free copy of the Indiana Community Tree Selection Guide. The guide can also be accessed on the Indiana Urban Forest Council website at <http://www.iufc.org>

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For more information about urban forestry management or the CUF program:

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